

**STARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES**

DATE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2011

SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEETING

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER PETER FERGUSON, PRESIDENT
COMMISSIONER JANET CREIGHTON, VICE PRESIDENT
COMMISSIONER THOMAS BERNABEI, MEMBER
JEAN YOUNG, COUNTY CLERK
MIKE HANKE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

FERGUSON: _____

BERNABEI: _____

CREIGHTON: _____

CLERK: _____

DATE APPROVED: _____

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Commissioner Ferguson opens the meeting.

Recite – Pledge of Allegiance

AMENDMENTS: NONE AVAILABLE

NOTICE: Minutes of meetings of the Board of Commissioners are filed as a permanent record in the official journal of the Board of Commissioners. The official record includes originals or copies of all resolutions that are adopted by the Board. This includes resolutions approving the signing of Contractual documents, financial transaction forms and other actions adopted by the Board. Contracts, agreements, leases, purchase orders, personnel actions and other such material referred to in the resolutions are filed by subject in the Administrative Offices and originated departments. The official journals that include, the minutes and related resolutions are available for public inspection in the Administrative Offices of the Commissioners.

Sales Tax Resolution:

Commissioner Bernabei:

I agree to vote No on this Resolution somewhat reluctantly.

By not scheduling public hearings, we are today foreclosing the issue of whether a sales tax could be placed on the May primary ballot. The decision we make today actually forecloses the receipt of any sales tax revenues (after expiration of the present tax) until June 2012 because of the lag in implementing a sales tax.

This is a decision that I would prefer to delay until February 2(the date by which a resolution needs to be sent to the BOE to place an issue on the ballot.) I would like to have the opportunity to obtain more input in a series of public hearings and other information gathering between now

and February 2. In my experience, more information and more time to study issues leads to better decision making.

On the other hand, I am also aware of the strong public sentiment against the sales tax. This is evidenced by the votes to repeal the imposed sales tax in November 2009, and also by the more recent November 2010 election results. The local economy also works against adoption of any tax issue. And perhaps most importantly, the theft of \$2.9 million from our County Treasury remains in the forefront of everyone's mind.

The new Board of Commissioners (Comm Creighton and myself along with Dr. Ferguson who has been here only 2 years) has been elected to bring more trust, credibility and accountability to County government. We have started down that path with more meetings, more transparency and open and responsible budget hearings. We have a great deal more work to do to earn that trust and credibility. I do not want to misplace any of that credibility by unnecessarily continuing any controversy about a May sales tax which realistically has little chance of passing.

In a companion resolution, we will be voting to conduct multiple hearings in all parts of the County concerning Stark County's financial situation and its government. In the next several weeks we will finalize this year's budget and significantly reduce government spending. County government will function in 2011 (although there will be safety concerns and there may be incidents which arise as a result of reductions in the size of the jail and deputies.)

The 2012 budget is a different story but that discussion is for another time and place.

Commissioner Creighton:

-I also will be voting no regarding the May ballot issue.

-I have not had the chance to explore all the options we may have.

-Yesterday we received news of our carryover of \$7.1 million dollars.

-We don't yet know what the State is going to do with our local funds.

-We must demonstrate to the tax payers what are intentions are and how we are going to get there.

-I am an advocate of visiting the 17 townships, 6 cities, and the villages to make sure everyone has a chance to be heard in moving forward in November. I can not go forward in good conscious right now without being in office for more than 5 days.

Commissioner Ferguson:

-There was a very positive article in the paper regarding the savings of \$1.2 million if we move into the Boe Building.

- We are facing many layoff situations within our County.
- The perception of County government is dead right now.
- We have to prove every week that we are changing that image.
- I am going to vote no on this issue as well. We must instill confidence in County government.

Commissioner Bernabei moved, seconded by Commissioner Creighton to establish dates and times for public hearings to consider whether to direct the Stark County Board of Elections to submit the question of levying a sales and use tax at a special election to be held May, 3, 2011

Roll Call: No. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Bernabei moved, seconded by Commissioner Creighton to establish a series of County-wide meetings to engage the public in conversations about its government.

Roll Call: Yes. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Bernabei moved, seconded by Commissioner Creighton to adjourn Special Meeting.

Roll Call: Yes. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Wright

Orig.: Alyssa Plakas
Cc: Commissioners